

The Master Plan encourages the elimination of Multi Track, but does not provide any framework for such an endeavor. In fact, although Multi Track is a huge problem for our schools, there is little background included in the Master Plan. The State needs to establish a comprehensive short-term plan to address the immediate funding problems associated with Multi Track and a long-term plan to expand facilities where Multi Track is utilized. Unfortunately, the Master Plan is incomplete in this respect, as the recommendation is perfunctory at best. The reformation of Multi Track is a critical issue that the Master Plan needs to better address.

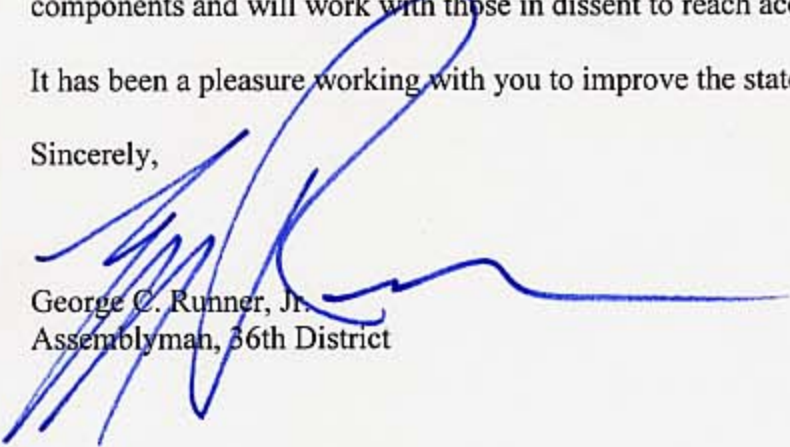
Class Size Reduction

Class Size Reduction was implemented under the auspices of fostering more personalized instruction for our children. A recent study by the Public Policy Institute of California found significant achievement gains in third grade, with an even greater gain for low-income students. Class Size Reduction has yielded significant benefits, but has also created new problems for our schools, including teacher and classroom shortages. This was a major policy initiative with significant ongoing repercussions, yet the Master Plan does not directly address this issue. Given the scope of the policy, the Master Plan should have focused on whether Class Size Reduction is a policy that we should expand to additional grade levels or reconsider given the problems it is causing for our schools.

The concerns I have raised are not intended to be construed as a comprehensive list. Indeed, there are several other problems that I have with the Master Plan, but these are the biggest in scope. However, despite my reservations, I have decided to sign the Master Plan in a spirit of collegiality. It is my hope that when the Legislature begins recommending policy changes from this document, they will recognize that there are significant objections to some of the included components and will work with those in dissent to reach acceptable, bipartisan solutions.

It has been a pleasure working with you to improve the state of education in California.

Sincerely,



George C. Runner, Jr.
Assemblyman, 36th District